

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES June 23, 2004

### Spending Billions on our Failed Intelligence Agencies

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation. Though I certainly recognize the legitimate national security role of our intelligence community, I have concerns about this authorization and the questionable role played by components of the intelligence community.

Specifically, I am concerned about our history of secret regime changes carried out by our intelligence apparatus. More often than not, we see many of the problems we face today were created as a result of this unwise practice of forcibly changing regimes in secret.

The stories of such activities are numerous. In 1953 the CIA overthrew Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, installing the Shah as dictator. This led to increasing anti-Americanism, the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, the kidnapping of Americans, the establishment of a hard-line Islamic regime hostile to the United States. In the 1980s the United States provided covert support to Saddam Hussein's Iraq in its war with Iran. Ten years later the United States went to war against Saddam Hussein and then 11 years after that the United States went to war again against Saddam's Iraq. In the 1980s the United States provided weapons and training to the Taliban and what later became Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan as they sought to overthrow the communist government in power. Some 20 years later, that same Taliban and Osama bin Laden struck out against the United States. The United States then went to war against that Taliban government.

I am also concerned about the efficacy of our intelligence community. The intelligence budget seems to grow every year, but seldom do my colleagues ask what exactly we are getting for our constituents' money. It may be unfair that we only hear about the intelligence community's failures and shortcomings, but we cannot help but be concerned over so many such failures in recent years. Despite the tens of billions we spend on these myriad intelligence agencies, it is impossible to ignore the failure of the intelligence community to detect and prevent the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Additionally, as we now see so clearly, our intelligence community failed completely to accurately assess the nature of the Iraqi threat. We were told of weapons of mass destruction capable of reaching the United States. This proved to be false. We were told of Iraq's relationship with Al-Qaeda. This proved to be false. The intelligence community relied heavily - perhaps almost exclusively --on Iraqi exile and convicted criminal Ahmad Chalabi to provide intelligence on Iraq and most of it turned out to be incorrect, perhaps intentionally misleading. Now we are told that Chalabi and his organization may have passed sensitive intelligence to Iran. We have read reports of secret pseudo-agencies set up in the Pentagon and elsewhere whose role appears to have been to politicize intelligence in order to force pre-determined conclusions. This does not serve the American people well. These are all by any measure grave failures, costing us incalculably in human lives and dollars. Yet from what little we can know about this bill, the solution is to fund more of the same. I would hope that we might begin coming up with new approaches to our intelligence needs.

I encourage my colleagues to reject this bill and instead begin looking for new ways to strengthen the legitimate functions of our intelligence community so as to better protect the borders and citizens of the United States.